IN THE CLAIMS

This listing of the claim will replace all prior versions and listings of claim in the present application.

Listing of Claims

1.   (currently amended)A data relay apparatus connected to a relay path and a communication apparatus-side path which is a path toward a communication apparatus, the data relay apparatus relaying data between said communication apparatus side path and said relay path, comprising:

~~transmission means for transmitting a specified signal to said communication apparatus-side path;~~

detection means for detecting ~~the~~a first specified signal which is transmitted by another data relay apparatus from said communication apparatus-side path; and

relay means for ~~processing~~encoding data received from said communication apparatus-side path to relay the data thus encoded to said relay path, and for ~~restoring~~decoding data received from said relay path to relay the data thus decoded to said communication apparatus-side path, when said detection means cannot detect said first specified signal; and for relaying data received from said communication apparatus-side path to said relay path without ~~processing~~encoding the data, and for relaying data received from said relay path to said communication apparatus-side path without ~~restoring~~decoding the data, when said detection means can detect the first specified signal.

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2. (currently amended)The data relay apparatus according to claim 1,

further ~~wherein~~ comprising:

~~said~~ transmission means for immediately ~~starts~~starting ~~a processing~~ to

transmit ~~the~~a second specified signal to said communication apparatus-side path

when a call is received from said relay path by said data relay apparatus, and

~~starts~~starting ~~a processing~~ to transmit said second specified signal to said

communication apparatus-side path after said detection means detects said first

specified signal when a call is received from said communication apparatus-side

path by said data relay apparatus;~~and~~,

wherein said relay means immediately relays the data received from said

communication apparatus-side path to said relay path without ~~processing~~encoding

the data and relays the data received from said relay path to said communication

apparatus-side path without ~~restoring~~decoding the data, after said detection means

detects said first specified signal, when a call is received from said relay path by said

data relay apparatus, and said relay means relays the data received from said

communication apparatus-side path to said relay path without ~~processing~~encoding

the data, and relays the data received from said relay path to said communication

apparatus-side path without ~~restoring~~decoding the data, after passage of a

predetermined period of time after said detection means detects said first specified

signal, when a call is received from said communication apparatus-side path by said

data relay apparatus.

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3.   (currently amended) The data relay apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said communication apparatus-side path is a communication channel for data sending/receiving, to/from a PBX (private branch exchange)which is set between said data relay apparatus and said communication apparatus.

4.   (original)   The data relay apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said relay path is a VP/VC (Virtual Path/Virtual Channel) set on an ATM (Asynchronous Transfer Mode) network.

5.   (currently amended) The data relay apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said data is voice data, and said processing encoding is a compression processing of said voice data, and said restoring decoding is an decompression processing of said voice data.

Claim 6 (canceled).

7.   (currently amended) A method of processingencoding/restoring decoding data in a data relay apparatus connected to a relay path and a communication apparatus-side path which is a path toward a communication apparatus, the data relay apparatus relaying the data between said communication apparatus-sided path and said relay path, wherein said data relay apparatus is allowed to execute:

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a process for detecting a first specified signal which is transmitted by another data relay apparatus from said communication apparatus-side path;

a process for transmitting a second specified signal to said communication apparatus-side path; and

~~a process for detecting the specified signal from said communication apparatus-side path; and~~

a process for ~~processing~~ encoding data received from said communication apparatus-side path to relay the thus encoded data to said relay path, and for ~~restoring~~ decoding data received from said relay path to relay the data thus decoded to said communication apparatus-side path, when said first specified signal cannot be detected~~-~~, and for relaying data received from said communication apparatus-side path to said relay path without ~~processing~~ encoding the data, and ~~for~~ relaying data received from said relay path to said communication apparatus-side path without ~~restoring~~ decoding the data, when said first specified signal can be detected.

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